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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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VOL. 13 NO. 17
SEPTEMBER 1983
ISSUE NO. 275

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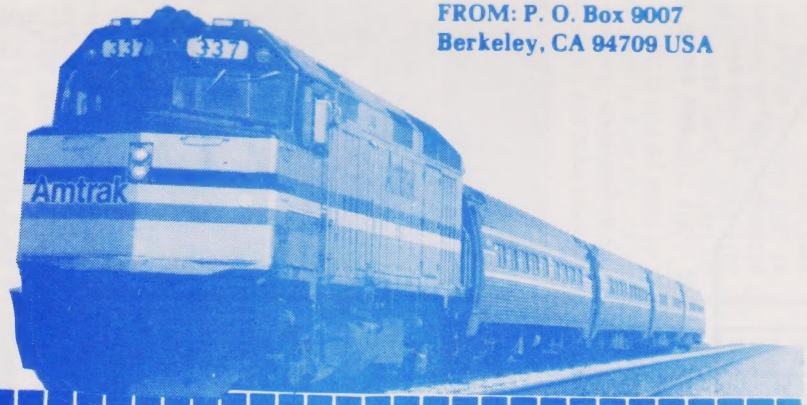

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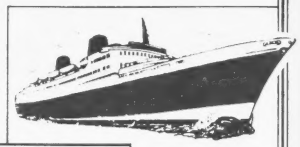

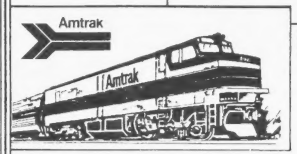

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LETTERS

The Wall Street Journal on Aug 26 reported another triumph by Amtrak Marketing. The Florida Auto Train service will start Oct 30, with prices that total to $1106 one way for a family of four in a sleeper. It would be cheaper to ride the SILVER STAR or SILVER METEOR, even in a sleeper, and rent a car for two weeks in Florida, and cheaper still to take your next flight on an airplane and rent a car for two weeks. To add insult to injury, the announced schedule is more than 90 minutes slower than the SILVER METEOR. They think they'll gross $28 million from this in the first year. At that price and schedule, it will be a hard sell. How much traffic will this divert from the STAR and METEOR?

This service was structured by the same geniuses who squandered $1 million in cash to advertise the New England Metroliners, with the result of averaging just 55 riders per trip this year (one weekday trip in August had a total of 15 passengers), while ignoring the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA after specifically promising in December of 1982 to make the SPIRIT a "special case" for extraordinary marketing support. They did nothing for the SPIRIT for seven months, stonewalled all improvements, including some cost-free improvements such as stopping at the San Fernando and Simi Valley "Caltrain" platforms, and watched the SPIRIT die.

Finally, a $7000 NARP ad campaign in May and June produced ridership increases of about 18% in May, 22% in June and 30% in July. Amtrak will drop the SPIRIT in September, but keep the New England Metroliners (which are the eighth and ninth weekday frequencies in that market). Once again, Amtrak management has displayed its contempt for Western markets and its irrational fixation on the NE Corridor.

Andrew Selden
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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ON THE COVER

The Labor Day weekend excursion "Rails in the Woods" on the Oregon, California and Eastern Railway on Sep 3 brought this photo by Gene Hines. The consist of the train on the cover was OC&E diesels 7603 and 7602; private cars "Yerba Buena" observation, coach 600, 510 "Tuolumne", 511 "Stanislaus", 507 "Shasta", 500 "San Joaquin", "Red River", "Lake Pepin", and dome lounge "Donner Pass." At Sycan, milepost 52.1, the engines moved to the rear of the train for the return trip, so dome "Donner Pass" became the first car, as in the photo below. This Great Western Tours excursion also featured a steam trip on the Oregon, Pacific & Eastern the following day. Both photos were taken at the West Switchback, milepost 32.5 on the Oregon, California and Eastern.

All Aboard Fares Extended Again

Once again Amtrak has extended its All Aboard America special fare plan.

In a Sep 2 press release, Amtrak said: "The national intercity passenger train company's experience with a similar fare program during the spring and summer 'has resulted in tremendous travel agency response,' according to James Callery, Amtrak's vice president, sales. The fare program was designed 'to combine the promotion of a quality product with a trial usage fare incentive,' he said.

"Travel agency support of this program was beyond all expectation,'" Callery continued, as he indicated that travel agency Amtrak sales increases for the period May, June and July were running approximately 50 percent higher than for a similar period in 1982. The All Aboard America Fares offer special maximum coach fares for travel within one or more regions if reservations are made and tickets purchased for the entire journey at least five days before beginning a trip. All Aboard America Fares will be sold thru February 29, 1984, with travel permitted thru March 31, 1984. The special fares may not be used during peak holiday travel periods: Nov 23 thru Nov 27, and Dec 16 thru Jan 3, 1984.

"As with the spring and summer plans, Amtrak passengers may make a round trip in one or more of three regions of the USA (including Montreal and Toronto in Canada in the eastern region) for a set maximum coach fare. You may take 30 days for the trip and are allowed a stopover in each direction in addition to the destination. Return may be over an alternate routing.

"Under the new plan, passengers using the special fares may upgrade their tick-

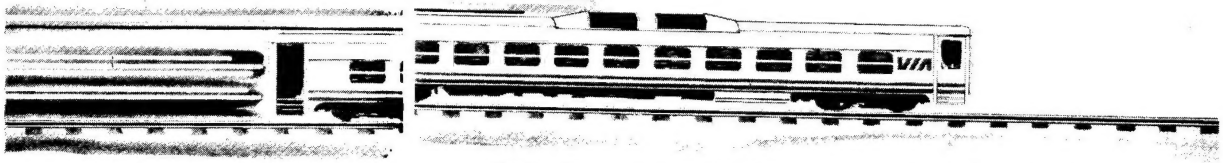
ets for purchase of sleeping car accommodations. Reserved seats for those traveling on the All Aboard America Fares will be limited, and these special fares are not valid for purchase of Club Car or Metroliner service space, Auto Train or Week of Wheels programs. All Aboard America tickets are available thru Amtrak ticket offices or travel agents and will not be sold aboard trains."

The fares are the same as under the summer plan: $175 for travel in one region, $225 for two adjoining regions, and $299 for the entire Amtrak system.

RAIL CANADA

GENERAL FARE INCREASE of 5% effective Sep 7 was announced by VIA Rail Canada in an Aug 30 release. VIA's last fare rise was 6% just one year before this one. VIA said the 7% rise reflects the impact of inflation, and conforms to the federal government's price and wage restraint guidelines. The new rates apply to both transportation and accommodation charges.

CALGARY-EDMONTON SERVICE has a new color brochure to advertise it. The brochure includes the illustration of a fast-traveling RDC shown here.



THE RDC CAR involved in the fatal crash on Mar 23 while traveling from Edmonton to Calgary may have had a defective safety control feature that applies brakes automatically if the engineer (as was speculated) had been thrown from his seat, according to the union newspaper Canadian Railwayman. The paper reported (from CTC investigation evidence) that an engineer had reported the safety feature inoperative, but it was not corrected in the shops. The train was also traveling at a speed between 40 and 65mph in a 30mph zone, the CTC report indicated. These two factors would have increased the severity of the crash, which was caused by a mis-set switch. The paper said the foreman of the maintenance of way gang that left the switch open had been fired and the conductor of the train demoted.

CANADIAN RAIL TRAVEL NOTES by Tom Higgins

After 34 days in Canada, I have some observations and predictions to report:

■The OCEAN runs 18 cars to Moncton, and about 10 beyond there. Contrary to rumors, the diner, two sleepers (one green and one "Bay" series), the Dayniter and 750-series bar-lounge-takeout car go on to Halifax. By Truro, most passengers have detrained; at least half of them detrain at Moncton, with a bus connection to Prince Edward Island and RDC connection to St. John and Fredericton.

■The OCEAN and the CHALEUR share the same menu--two selections for each meal. The meals are cooked on board, and for the most part were good.

■VIA has introduced a new foldover railpass in brown and gold. It's quite attractive and fits easily into one's wallet. The price of a pass went up by about 8%, and all VIA fares were going up 5% on Sep 7.

■VIA must be short of power, as many corridor trains are seen with leased CN engines at Dorval. Also, RDCs are expected to cover the mid-day service from Montreal to Ottawa, all connecting trains in the Maritimes, and both sets of cars from Calgary to South Edmonton. The CANADIAN frequently gets an SD40-2 from Vancouver, sometimes as far east as Winnipeg. The old F units are not getting major overhauls, and are failing in the Rockies.

■A good many VIA RDCs are being remotored with Cummings engines, as it is easier to get parts for them.

■On all unreserved trains VIA is trying to get passengers to inform them of changes in their travel plans to avoid standees. In Calgary VIA did add an extra RDC-1 to the South Edmonton train as a result of overcrowding.

■The Halifax station has had its shed roof removed--great for picture-taking, not so great when it rains or snows.

■The Halifax-Yarmoutn (DAR) run has two RDCs with snack bar service. It connects with both OCEANS, except from Halifax on Sundays, and also with the Sydney train. Its schedule is very demanding--no padding. It was very well patronized in July and August. Some unmanned stations have been put in on this run, and they are wooden and quite attractive. CP has done quite a bit of track work on this line, and running speeds are impressive compared to two years ago.

■Sydney RDC train 605 is added to 616 at Truro to become train 605/616 to Halifax. It generally runs three cars, and with weekend service is expanded to 4. To get to Sydney, you take the OCEAN local coach from Halifax to Truro, and change trains to the RDC consist at Truro. The eastbound OCEAN also connects here with the Sydney runs, and ridership is cheek to jowl. The schedule is tight, but generally maintained, unless the OCEANS are late, which happens (thanks to CN) too frequently.

■The former Amtrak LRC trainsets are stored in a field in Quebec Province, and can be seen from passing trains. Ticket agents in some stations refer to them as "lousy" and "rotten."

SOUTH EDMONTON-CALGARY DAYLINER REPORT

by Bob Rynerson

Trains 194 and 197 ran wonderfully fast by North American standards, and on time by ICC standards (I haven't yet found a Canadian standard). They now offer, since the July 1 launching of Upgraded Service, a microwave-equipped snack bar for take-back-to-your-seat dining. Yet, the 90mph running and the courteous crew are undercut by:

- no printed timetable out yet to show times for the new van and truck connection between South Edmonton and the downtown CN Tower Station,
- an expensive, full-colour brochure (also available in French, unlike those of all other carriers on this route) that takes two pages to list every VIA Rail phone number in Canada, but gives no train times, or fares, or intermediate stops, or other hard information. Ask for it at ticket counters, and they will dig one out for you. My neighbourhood travel agent had never seen one,
- the van service had included a stop at the Hotel Macdonald in Edmonton's downtown, the CN hotel was widely known to be marked for total renovation, and it closed just after the Upgraded Service period of one year began,
- running time for the van service in Edmonton is triple the rail running time for the same trip: southbound running times had to be padded because all weekday trips hit peak hour traffic jams. On weekends the van arrives long before train time,
- a platform at South Edmonton which cannot handle the activity around Trains 195 and 196. Luckily, the ground is frozen hard during the Christmas-New Year rush, but in summer the mud at trainside is nearly impassible,
- advertising concentrated in the least cost-effective media buy, rather than targeted in media reaching the likely passenger market,
- the endless VIA-CP responsibility split, which ranges from whether VIA or CP personnel in Calgary should locate my lost hat (neither could do so--no procedures

have been established) to who should inform the next of kin or visit hospitals after a fatal accident.

At the end of the Upgraded Service experiment, a thick project report which will be available in both official languages (English Bureaucratic and Bureaucratic Francais) will prove that a leaderless and disorganized group of individuals can spend over a million dollars. It may even note that they provided courteous service to those persons who found it necessary to dig thru the obstacles to finding that service, and that the trip was pleasant enough once the passengers had already paid their money.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

EXTENDING PENINSULA TRAINS to the Ferry Building in San Francisco is now officially dead. Caltrans on Sep 14 finally dropped the plan, which was opposed by influential real estate interests in S.F. Now, however, Caltrans favors extending the Peninsula commute line to the Trans-Bay Terminal instead. The Terminal is the end point for AC Transit buses from the Eastbay, and Market Street streetcars make the terminal a turnaround point. The projected cost of the SP line extension is $300 million. The project would require 5-7 years to build. Peninsula train service has been losing patronage, even with Caltrans' efforts to improve it. A downtown rail station is deemed a necessity for making the service viable.

"NEW ENGLAND TRAGEDY in the making" is what NARP termed the Boston situation, where the state wants to build an 8-lane freeway, but has no plans to connect North and South Station by rail. Lack of such a connection resulted in the "premature death of intercity rail passenger service in northern New England," NARP said. A connection would help the commuter rail system in Boston also. Rail supporters are being asked to write Elizabeth Dole, the Federal Transportation Secretary about the matter.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD commuters who also like to smoke on their trains have formed a citizens committee, Commuter Rights Action Committee (CRAC), to lobby for more smoking cars on the LIRR. The railroad last May 16 reduced the number of smoking cars to one car in a consist of ten or fewer cars.

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION on Sep 8 agreed to provide $7 million in state money to start construction on the Sacramento Light Rail System. The amount is the last part of a $131 million package which includes $96 million in federal transfer funds which became available when Sacramento dediced not to build the I-80 bypass north of the city. To get the funds approved, the Sacramento Transit Development Agency had to agree not to hold the state responsible for cost overruns and to reduce its patronage estimates from 28,000 to 20,500 daily. This reduction means that double-tracking would not have to be provided at first, and the estimated cost of the project could be lowered. On the same day, the Commission okayed a $1.2 million grant towards rebuilding of San Francisco's cable car system.

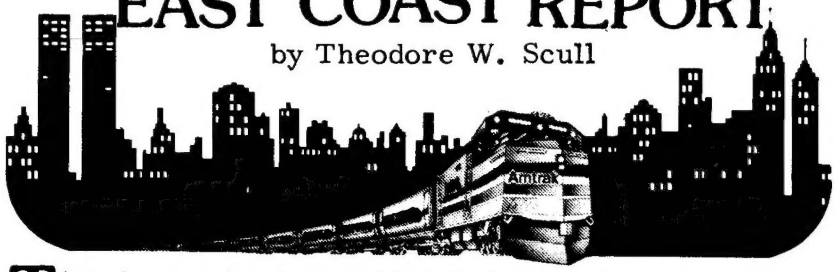
SOUVENIR BUS TOKENS will be sold by the Southern Calif. Rapid Transit District to help finance bus service during the Olympic Games next summer in L.A. Tokens in the amounts of $.50 and $2.00, plus fifty-cent tokens with sports designs imprinted on them, will be sold. Marketing will get underway Nov 1.

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION Elizabeth Dole on Sep 7 said that proposed revisions to rules governing mass transit service for elderlyand handicapped persons will show a strong Federal commitment to assuring availability of this type of transportation to all citizens. A Notice of Rulemaking to be published in the Federal Register will set service criteria to ensure that transportation for these people is comparable to that available to the general transit user. Service must be on the same days and during the same hours as the general public's, cost of a trip must be similar,

(continued on page 19)

EAST COAST REPORT

by Theodore W. Scull



There is no question in my mind that the Auto Train is an idea whose time has come--again. Prospective passengers have begun lining up at ticket offices, and one reader reported a very harried clerk at Amtrak's new World Trade Center office. A Conrail employee at the south end of the Northeast Corridor wrote that Amtrak was sprucing up the Lorton VA terminal which he said "had just about gone back to its natural state." A photograph in the Orlando paper showed a weedy scene at the Sanford station.

A Sanford Chamber of Commerce official said that 400 jobs were lost in the greater Sanford area when the privately-operated Auto-Train shut down in 1981. A Florida state labor market analyst thought that Amtrak's operation might lower the local unemployment rate by a full percentage point. (Thanks to RTN reader Steve Evans for the Florida report.)

No doubt booking will be heavy, but the real test will come when the first round of passengers decide whether to repeat the experience and begin spreading the word among their friends. While the fares are high, the long drive is simply awful, and that should help attract travelers; but the on-board service will be the key to passenger satisfaction, an uncertain variable on all Amtrak trains.

★ ★ ★

A second unexpected blow to the Metropolitan Transit Authority came on Aug 29 when Richard Ravitch, the MTA's Chairman, announced that he too was quitting. The Transit Authority President John Simpson had resigned only 13 days before.

Like Mr. Simpson, Ravitch was considered to have been a highly skillful innovator who took over a crumbling system four years ago and then laid out an $8.5-billion 10-year capital and financial plan to resurrect it. Most of the benefits such as the new subway cars from Canada and Japan, will come after he leaves office.

Ravitch's preliminary explanation for stepping down was to return to a more normal life in the private sector and to be able to spend some time with his wife and two sons. Further questioning prompted the additional reasons of personal exhaustion, constant criticism and pressure on his family.

The position has been considered part-time, with a salary of only $15,000; but in Richard Ravitch's case, he is a wealthy man who has made his money in the construction business. New York Governor Mario Cuomo would like to change the job to read full-time and pay the next Chairman $100,000 a year, which is more than the Governor himself is paid.

In its lead editorial on Sep 6, the New York Post suggested that the MTA, being one of the biggest businesses in the country, with an annual budget of $2.6 billion and 55,000 employees, look to one of the large corporations for a new head. The paper then put forth Chrysler's boss Lee Iacocca as a possible choice, and Iacocca in a subsequent conversation with Governor Cuomo asked him if he was out of his mind.

To further put the size of the task in perspective, the MTA's subways, buses and commuter trains handle a weekday average of 5.58 million fares, or one of

every three people who use public transportation in this country. The MTA carries as many passengers in 3½ days as Amtrak handles in an entire year.

★ ★ ★

Mopping up the unfinished business about Metro-North's crew size negotiations, the railroad now has the right to determine the manning level of its trains, according to 12 specific guidelines related to workload and only after consultation with the United Transportation Union. Both sides appeared to be happy, and it seems that no operating employees will lose their jobs. The details of the agreement are to complex to include in this column, but a summary may be had by sending me an SASE to 325 East 72nd Street, New York NY 10021.

★ ★ ★

A power failure at Penn Station, New York on Sep 10, lasting from 5:10pm to 7:57pm, halted all rail service out of the station in the direction of New Jersey. Affected were 26 NJ Transit trains on the NE Corridor and North Jersey Coast Lines with 20,000 outgoing and 5000 incoming riders and 7000 Amtrak passengers on 15 intercity trains.

★ ★ ★

On a decidedly lighter note, one of the most unusual exhibits of railroad photography ever shown went on display (until Sep 22) at the International Center for Photography, Fifth Avenue and 94th Street, Manhattan. Brooklyn-born camera expert O. (Ogle) Winston Link, spending a couple of weeks at a time from 1955 to 1958, captured the end of the Norfolk and Western's steam train operations in the Shenandoah Valley. His pictures are not the endless locomotive shots that one sees over and over again in the enthusiast magazines, but technical creations where the big, beautiful engines act as focal points around which an American vignette is created.

When touring the show, one thinks of Norman Rockwell and the Saturday Evening Post, but these pictures are not only innocent portrayals of Americana, they are quite carefully contrived settings, and as a result they are even more extraordinary. A family of kids is seen swimming in a stream at night while a floodlighted locomotive thunders over a high trestle in the background. Another one shows a young couple seated in an open convertible at a drive-in movie taking no notice (imagine!) as the engine dramatically speeds into view.

The show, entitled "Ghost Trains", moves south after Sep 22 to N&W territory in Norfolk VA at the Chrysler Museum beginning Oct 28.

After seeing these 30 photographs, only a few in Mr. Link's enormous collection, it will be hard to look at ordinary folks' train pictures again for some time.

What's Doing at Beech Grove

A Look at Amtrak's Repair & Maintenance Shops

The accompanying photo shows one of five Amtrak auto carriers finished for use on the Auto Train, as of Sep 1. The five cars are 9004 (shown), 9106, 9113, and 9118. Also finished is car 8600, a "Table Car" which will provide the seating area for the diners. Amtrak planned to use the full-length "View" series dome cars for the opening of the service, but since they will not be ready in time, Amtrak will go with the dome coaches, in the 9400-series, at first.

Conrail track inspection car no. 21, ex-Santa Fe car 55, was almost ready and was fully painted by the first of September.

Superliner car 34100 had received all current modifications at Beech Grove, including one that is obvious to the average observer: it has had new striping applied to the sides, similar to that now being applied to all Amtrak engines and cars. The stripes are a bit wider on the Superliner, however, to fit over the old stripes.

Amtrak engine 242 was released from overhaul on August 31. All overhauls now

have been speeded up from 45 days to 18 days. Engine 284 was back in Beech Grove for awhile to have its main generator replaced, and was scheduled to be finished by Labor Day. GE locomotive 700 was almost ready for the paint shops.

GE shop switcher no. 7 was out of service most of July and August with a burned-out traction motor, but is now back in service, being used to switch Auto Train carriers out of the shops.

Senator Asks Spirit Takeover

Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada has written to Amtrak President Graham Claytor requesting Amtrak to extend the **SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA** train to Reno, Nevada and make it a part of the permanent Amtrak system. The news report came on Sep 15. The train is said to have the support of Chambers of Commerce and city supervisors in Nevada communities. The California Legislature did not bring up a vote to attempt to override Gov. Deukmejian's veto of train funding, since other override attempts on bigger issues had been unsuccessful, and it was believed that the train issue would be also.

When asked about the letter to Claytor, an Amtrak spokesman was unable to comment, since the letter had probably not arrived yet. However, the spokesman pointed out that Claytor has historically taken the stance that Amtrak will run no new service that is not guaranteed to turn a profit unless it is paid to do so. The train would be a "major financial responsibility" that is "not budgeted", the Amtrak spokesman said, and Amtrak has a strong commitment to reduce its dependency on Federal appropriations.

A California rail supporter reacted to Amtrak's comments with the word "baloney." Rail supporters in the state are asking others urgently to write to Senator Paul Laxalt (c/o Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510) in support of his plan. In addition, Californians are asked to write their own two Senators, Cranston and Wilson, at the same address. (Those outside California can write to Laxalt.)

As of now, the train is scheduled to have its last runs on Sep 30. Ridership has increased remarkably in recent months with the initiation of advertising paid for by state and national rail supporters, members of NARP and CRC. Ridership figures for the train's first year of operation show a very high percentage of long-distance, high-revenue, end-point to end-point traffic on the train.

DETROIT COMMUTER TRAINS are in danger of being discontinued on Oct 1, the National Association of RR Passengers reports. A SEMTA vote on them is being taken on Sep 20.

THE COST OF IDLE CAPACITY: A LESSON IN LOST OPPORTUNITY

by Andrew C. Selden

Six months a year (roughly speaking, May thru September and Thanksgiving thru New Year's), Amtrak long distance trains operate at or near capacity. Despite this, Graham Claytor has said that Amtrak has enough long distance cars, and foresees no need for new cars until Heritage Fleet equipment is retired in the 1990's. Amtrak currently has nine Superliner cars in what amounts to dead storage at Beech Grove (the cars and dates of arrival at Beech Grove are : 31035 Mar '82, 32019, 32021, 32039, 38025 Jul '82, 34016, 34020, 34030 Sep '80, 34042 Jan '82) and another ten or so Superliners dedicated to **NORTH STAR** and Seattle-Portland equipment pools due to all available surplus Amfleet I cars undergoing refitting at Beech Grove for rotation into renovated Metroliner Service.

CanAmtrak get by with what it has? Can it afford to tie up million-dollar Superliners in short-haul, 300-mile per day services or in long term storage? It can only if it can rely on Federal operating handouts indefinitely, which it shouldn't count on. Let's see what Amtrak's equipment management and procurement policies are costing it in lost ticket revenue and profit.

Assume that the **EMPIRE BUILDER** is typical of Western long-haul trains and that its data are reasonably predictive of experiences on other routes. On the **BUILDER** over the six peak months, assume an average 72-seat leg-rest coach has about a 60% load factor and each of those seats is sold 2.5 times per trip (this closely approximates the **BUILDER**'s actual experience in June, 1983). This represents 108 tickets per trip. The average ticket sale on the **BUILDER** is for $70, yielding cash revenue of $7560 per trip. If the car makes four roundtrips per month (allowing six days off for servicing), it will gross $60,480 a month, or $360,000 over the six peak months it is used. Looked at another way, if each route accounts for 62 departures per month (one each way each day, except in the Sunbelt), each route without the extra coach is foregoing $468,720 per month in marginal revenue. Our hypothetical car is an add-on coach to an existing train and can sit idle during the six slack months, or be rotated into Jan-Apr service on the Auto Train, to make still more money.

Amtrak's Planning Department believes that an add-on coach would need a 50% load factor to break even, even if no additional locomotives, food service cars or other major costs resulted. This is inherently implausible and reflects Amtrak's habit of calculating its systemwide average variable costs rather than its actual marginal cost of any given activity. It also overstates the *actual* marginal cost of operating our hypothetical extra car by 30 to 50%, but let's use Amtrak's figure to be conservative. By this measure, the car costs about $5000 per trip, or $240,000 over its six months of use.

By this reckoning, Amtrak is losing $20,000 per car per month of pure, genuine profit by shorting the consists of Western long-hauls by one coach. If each of six primary Western long-hauls added just one coach per trip during the six peak months, Amtrak would gross an additional $16,874,000 and would *net* $5,714,000 per year of additional operating profits. Costs really are closer to $3000 per trip, so the lost profit is closer to $10.2 million.

In its justification for re-routing the **CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR**, Amtrak claimed that it would realize additional food service revenue in an amount equal to 10% of the marginal transportation revenues projected from the service change. This is nonsense, because it understates actual spending and overstates net "profit" from the service. But let's use their figure on our hypothetical example. We can produce

(continued on page 20)

The Great CPR Exposition

by Robert W. Rynerson

Just across the street from Calgary's unusual station-in-a-basement lies the Glenbow Museum. And until May 13, 1984, it is featuring The Great CPR Exposition, exploring the impact of "the" railway on Western Canada (covering the period of 1883 to 1930).

The exposition covers this subject from a variety of angles, which could disappoint the hardcore railfan. However, this same variety makes the showing very suitable as a whole-family activity. Its significance includes the fact that it has brought together a number of artifacts which are normally spread across Canada and the U.S. Some of the items are from private collections and have the effect of making such greats as W. C. Van Horne seem much closer to our own lives. A moment spent looking at the play of light thru the stained glass skylight of a pre-WW II Princess liner suddenly wrenches the viewer out of the Lexan age.

The Glenbow is undergoing budget troubles right now, so prices and hours are subject to change. However, as of the end of August, museum hours are 10am-6pm daily except Monday. Adult admission is $2.00, senior citizens 50¢, students $1.00, and children under 12 (with adult) free.

The CPR showing, prepared with the company's assistance, takes about one to three hours to walk thru, depending upon the viewer's interests. Fortunately, tickets are valid for readmission on the date of issue, so a nearby lunch or coffee stop can be made before resuming visits to the fine regular collections of Western Art, the Crown in Canada, and Military History, as well as other special showings.

The bookstore has been specially stocked with Western Canadian rail books, as well as the usual British large-format picture/rambling text mishmashes. A strict budget kept me to the real treasures: a Hat Rail Mobilia Collectors Ltd. (Medicine Hat, Alberta publisher) reprint of the 1920 CPR Dining Car Service "Standard of Portions, Prices and Table Service", and a Railfare Enterprises Ltd. (Box 33, West Hill, Ontario M1E 4R4) reprint of the July 19, 1892 CPR "Annotated Time Table."

The dining car service manual not only provides useful information on how to fold napkins properly, but also offers fascinating instructions on garnishing meat dishes, and which supplementary dishes or plates or silver to use. Of course, it includes the now wildly-outdated pre-inflation prices (if you don't count the WWI inflation, which now looks trivial at the last decade's rates). More significantly, it gives some insight into the management of a farflung system, when service standards could be maintained without pre-packaging a nation's dinner in some Eastern warehouse.

The "Annotated Time Table" takes the readers from their steamship's landing in Halifax or Quebec City on the imperial route across North America, seemingly mile

(continued on page 14)

On the City and the Builder

by Jack M. Turner

New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal was abuzz with activity the afternoon of June 29 as passengers for the SUNSET LIMITED, CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, and numerous Greyhound buses converged on the spacious, well-kept edifice. The station is centrally located--within walking distance of the Superdome and several large hotels and only a short cab ride from the French Quarter and 1984 World's Fair site. Hopefully, Amtrak will capitalize on that event and try to lure passengers to visit the Crescent City by rail.

There was adequate time for boarding, and soon we found ourselves in Bedroom E of car 2463 (former CB&Q "Silver Dale"). It was pleasing to find our porter Mario ready to carry our luggage on board, after we'd encountered some less than helpful porters on previous Amtrak trips. At the appointed hour of 3:20pm, train 58, the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, eased out of the station, past the Superdome, and onto the Illinois Central Gulf.

Within moments the Crew Chief stopped by to introduce himself, explain the new on-board director program, and welcome us aboard Amtrak. Less conscientious crew chiefs may, unfortunately, be of little assistance to passengers, as their badges simply identify them as "Chief," a label that does not necessarily invite inquiries.

By 3:45 we were crossing the swamplands of lower Louisiana, leading to a 10-minute ride along the western edge of Lake Pontchartrain, then more swamps, and finally back on solid ground into Hammond. At 4:55 we entered Mississippi and shortly passed a cut of Amtrak and Auto-Train cars near Magnolia. Judging from the appearance of the siding on which they stood, it is safe to say they are not in anyone's immediate plans. Seven miles later, at McComb, a large ICG yard and engine shop was passed. Here stood several in-service ICG engines with badly deteriorated paint.

The remainder of the evening's ride thru the Magnolia State featured many small towns with large ante-bellum homes, a view of the state capitol at Jackson, and a 54mph average speed.

A quick glimpse at the train's cars revealed an Amdinette and six Heritage coaches following our lone sleeper. Midweek business appeared to be only so-so, as many empty seats and sleeping spaces were in evidence.

Before we turned in for the night, a look at Memphis was in order. From the bedroom window, the depot area looked about as decrepit as any I've ever seen. Yet, within five minutes we passed within arm's length of several fashionable Beale Street restaurants and shops, all alive with patrons at 10:45pm! I couldn't help asking why Amtrak can't relocate to such locations to make the trains easy to reach. At least a few diners SAW a train.

Thursday, June 30

Awakening at Rantoul, I discovered we had somehow lost 49 minutes. Altho much of the "Mainline of Mid-America" had passed while I slumbered, I couldn't help feeling glad our overpriced room had at least been used for sleeping. Mario passed the punctuality test, meanwhile, by bringing complimentary hot tea and a newspaper at the arranged time of 8:00.

Despite some 85mph running near Ashkum, Illinois, train 58 lost another 24 minutes into Kankakee and two more into Homewood, where we met the southbound SHAWNEE.

Having entered Chicago numerous times on the CARDINAL, FLORIDIAN and Michigan trains on less than scenic trackage, I watched with great interest the CITY OF NEW ORLEAN's route into the Windy City.

At 9:48 Lake Michigan came into view across a highway and park area. Four minutes later our train passed Soldier Field and swung west onto the St. Charles Air Line just south of the ICG commuter yards. To say the least, this was an interesting piece of track as it wound its way between warehouses and overgrown bushes which actually brushed the train. The Chicago River and Amtrak's Brighton Park maintenance facility were bridged at 9:57 and by 10:03 a 7-minute backup move on BN trackage was begun. This operation put no. 58 on the tracks adjacent to Brighton Park, exactly below the overpass we had crossed 13 minutes earlier. From here it was a short forward move into Chicago Union Station, with arrival at 10:18am, 53 minutes late. Across the platform was VIA LRC engine 6904 and four conventional VIA coaches about to depart as the INTERNATIONAL LIMITED.

Friday, July 1

Having forgotten this was a holiday weekend, we were surprised by the huge throng awaiting the EMPIRE BUILDER departure at Chicago Union Station's track 19.

A few short steps led to sleeper 32062, the last Superliner car on the train. Private car "Mt. Rainier", painted in Milwaukee Road colors would bring up the rear this trip, a nice ending to a 12-car train.

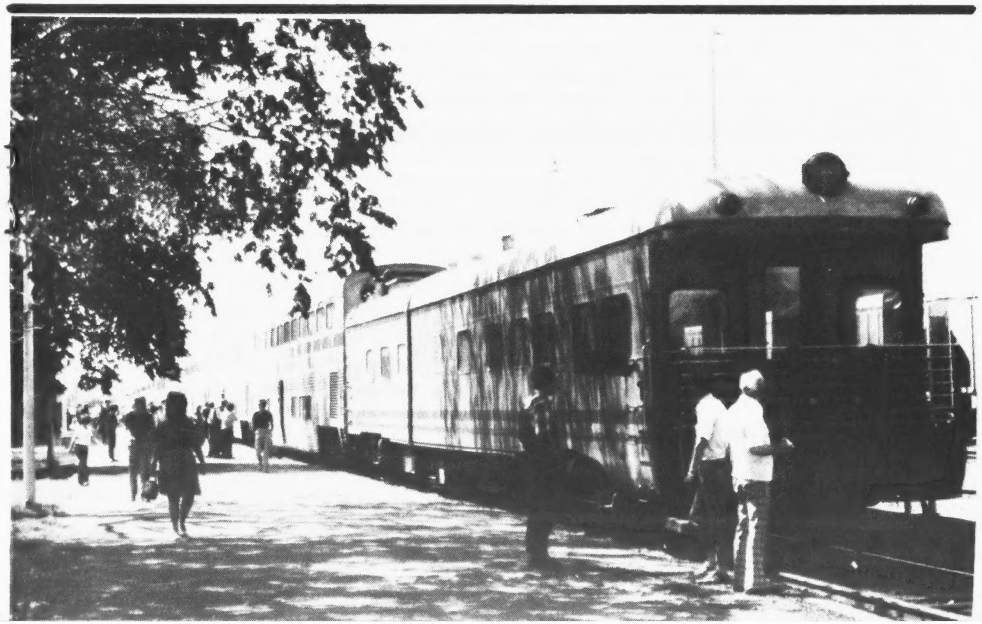
Our first visit inside a Superliner sleeper brought surprise at the relative size of the economy bedroom compared to the tiny slumbercoach rooms on the Florida trains. Meanwhile, a very late connecting train, the WOLVERINE, necessitated a late departure but this made little difference as the crew kept passengers informed. Finally, F40s 370 and 368 eased the EMPIRE BUILDER out the north side of Union Station at 2:57pm.

Before our first stop, Glenview, the conductor had lifted our tickets and offered dinner reservations. With an apparently oversold train (some coach passengers assigned to the Sightseer lounge), it was appreciated that these reservations were first offered to sleeping car passengers.

Moments later, porter Ronald Bach appeared at the door with a bucket of ice--a welcome gesture after a warm day in Chicago. This would be the first of many extraordinary services Mr. Bach was seen providing to his passengers.

Milwaukee came and went as the southbound MARQUETTE passed by. Soon it was time to test Amtrak's dinner reservation system. The crew responded to the crowded conditions with great efficiency as sittings were announced on schedule, meals delivered punctually, and service was friendly. The Chicken Kiev dish, tho cooked by microwave, was a definite cut above the "micro-food" of recent years.

Altho train 7 consistently was losing a minute or two between stops, no one seemed to mind as the scenic Wisconsin farmlands and Mississippi River sunset seemed to transfix time. West of LaCrosse, the minutes late began to shrink, and St. Paul/Minneapolis was reached at 10:44pm, just nine minutes late thanks to a padded schedule. A walk inside Midway Station, a



(Right:) Private car "Mt. Rainier" was bringing up the rear of the westbound EMPIRE BUILDER at Havre, Montana on July 2. Photo by the author.

clone to the Richmond, Virginia station, revealed a large crowd ready to replace those who had detrained at previous stops. The night's running was both smooth and swift, as sleep came easily and we pulled into Rugby, North Dakota on schedule the next morning.

Saturday, July 2

The morning was spent playing hide and seek with the Amtrak timetable as the EMPIRE BUILDER varied from 15minutes late at Wolf Point to 11 minutes early into Havre, where the time was well spent looking at preserved Great Northern S-2 steam locomotive 2584. Meanwhile, the North Dakota and eastern Montana landscape was providing vistas of vast prairielands, small lakes, and three Indian reservations. Fort Peck Indian Reservation afforded a view of a herd of Buffalo roaming the rangeland and moments later a cluster of tipis, tents and campers as the reservation celebrated the Fourth of July weekend. Both sights were pre-announced by the crew, and the frequent clicking of cameras indicated an appreciation of the effort.

Following another punctual dinner, it was time for the scenic passage thru the south edge of Glacier National Park. Unfortunately, just as #7 left East Glacier, a brief downpour doused the train's windows, making photography hopeless except from the vestibule window. Eastbound BN traffic was heavy as four freights were passed within a 55-minute span between Marias Pass and Red Eagle. The BUILDER would stay close to schedule from here on into Seattle.

Sunday, July 3

Wenatchee at dawn is quite a visual and olfactory treat with the snow-capped Cascade Mountains and fragrant apple orchards in close proximity. This would also mark the first of six crossings of the mighty Columbia River on our trip. The 7.9-mile Cascade Tunnel came a bit too early for most passengers at 6:17am, but by the time Puget Sound came into view, most of the train was awake to enjoy the crew's narrative of the scenic highlights into Seattle, including a glimpse of the "Princess Marguerite" en route to Victoria. Arrival in Seattle came at 9:07am, eight minutes early.

CPR Exposition

(continued from page 11)

by mile. I was looking for the account of pre-Spiral Tunnel days in the Rockies (when meal stops were made by all trains because diners added too much weight), but also found details on the Empress and Princess services, as well as on Eastern routes. Again, this book reflects a better understanding of the needs of rail passengers than the slim offerings of either VIA or Amtrak.

The 1892 writer turned the railway car window into a proscenium arch for a story of natural forces, historical drama, and the contemporary life of that day. The attention to such details as a necessary part of a multi-million dollar enterprise contrasts sharply with our family excursion observations on the Dayliners between South Edmonton and Calgary (compare account in Rail Canada, this issue).

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"In FY82, although a depressed national economy kept systemwide ridership below projected levels and lowered our revenue and cost forecasts, Amtrak demonstrated its ability to function as a first-rate operating railroad. In the face of a declining economy, Amtrak was able to reduce its administrative and infrastructure costs while implementing marketing strategies to maximize revenues. As a result, Amtrak met its statutory goal of recovering 50 percent of its costs through revenues in FY82 and is determined to improve on this performance in the years ahead."

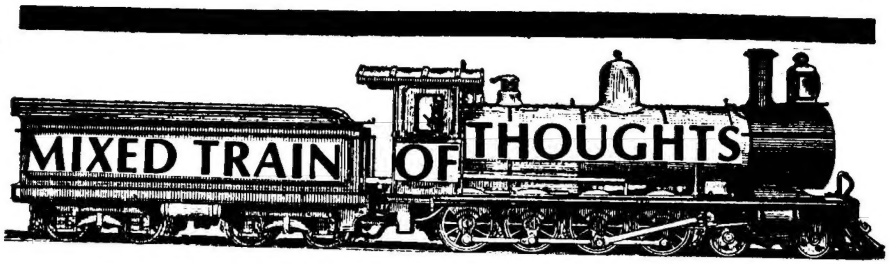
--W. Graham Claytor, Jr., in Amtrak 1982 Annual Report.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The Silver Meteor (above) carves its way along the Cascades, Oregon's majestic mountain range that rises from misty valleys, its sharp peaks topped with snow."

--Photo caption in Jacksonville FL Times-Union and Journal Aug 21.

(Making way for the Auto Train?)



THE 403-B PENNSYLVANIAN, which runs Philadelphia-Pittsburgh, will be extended to New York effective Oct 30. The Pennsylvania DOT announced the change in a Sep 8 press release. Transportation Secretary Thomas D. Larson said, "Passengers who have traveled on these trains in the past between stations in Pennsylvania and points north of Philadelphia have had to change trains at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station. With this new agreement, passengers will no longer have this inconvenience because the PENNSYLVANIAN will provide thru cars between New York and Pittsburgh each way daily." The new schedule will bring service to North Philadelphia and Downingtown, which have not had thru east-west train service for several years.

The new westbound schedule will be: lv New York 7:30am, lv Phila. 9:25am, ar Pittsburgh 4:18pm. Eastbound, lv Pittsburgh 9:45am, ar Phila. 4:44pm, ar New York 6:37pm. The new service will replace NY-Phila trains 237 and 220, which operate on less than daily schedules.....

***

U.S. APPEALS COURT on Sep 6 rejected the state of Wyoming's plea that Amtrak continue to serve the state. The ruling was that the ICC decision not to oppose the move of Amtrak's to the Rio Grande route was made properly within the law. The Denver court's review of the case is considered the last resort that the state has in legal appeals to retain passenger train service by Amtrak.....

SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA was the subject of almost half of the August NARP newsletter. NARP called the situation a "Tragedy in California." At length it recounted how NARP President Jack Martin had asked Amtrak President Graham Claytor to do something to save the train. However, nothing has been done by Amtrak, despite more than one promise from Amtrak's Marketing Department that a "special case" would be made of the train. Said NARP, "In light of the current ridership surge and next summer's Olympic Games in Los Angeles and Democratic Convention in San Francisco, it's incomprehensible that the governor and Amtrak would let this train die now—a train which required three years of legal battling to obtain in the first place".....

***

THE UNION PACIFIC ran a passenger special between Salt Lake City and Las Vegas on Aug 30. Consist of the train was SD40 engine 3545, steam generator dorm car 304, sleepers "Sun Ridge" and "Sun Skies", diner or lounge 5000, and dome coach 7006. The train deadheaded back the same day. We don't have any other information on it.....

NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD might be purchased by North American Locomotive Inc., a Denver company that has patented a modern version of a steam engine that it believes could revolutionize railroading. The company believes it could make the lien profitable with the use of its locomotive. Unlike the two other prospective buyers of the NWP from SP, Brian Whipple and Dillingham Maritime, NAL wants the entire route.....

DELOREAN AUTOMOBILE OWNERS will have to forego taking their cars on the Amtrak Auto Train, as Amtrak rules won't allow the gull-winged auto on the auto carrier cars because of restricted clearances. Amtrak has a whole list of cars that are prohibited on the train. In general, cars must have more than a 4-inch ground clearance to make it onto the carriers. A list of prohibited vehicles is said to be programmed into the ARROW computer.....

THE REAL PEOPLE television program with the first installment of the latest Amtrak trip appeared on Sep 14. The second and third programs will be televised on Sep 21 and 28 on NBC.....

★★★

CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE TRAINS may get changes with the Amtrak Oct 30 timetable. As reported by Wisconsin ARP, train 334 may leave Milwaukee about 1:00pm instead of 4:25 and might get a baggage car added to its consist. One other change is reported possible, tho less likely—the addition of a roundtrip using equipment from the LAKE CITIES which is run thru.....

THE SOO LINE'S mixed trains continue to run, reports Charles Tubman of WisARP. Schedules are tentative, but daily departure from Neenah WI is at 2am, with 5pm arrival at Sault Ste. Marie, MI. The return trip leaves at 1:15am and gets into Neenah at 6pm. Departure from Rhinelander WI is at 6pm, with arrival at Sault Ste. Marie at 12:01pm; for the return trip, departure is 6pm, with 9am arrival at Rhinelander. Only one passenger is carried on each trip, in a caboose.....

THE NORTH STAR has a funding problem, reports MinnARP. The Minnesota legislature has put a $400,000 limit on the train's funding per year, but Amtrak estimates it will need $575,000 from the state in FY 84 and $604,000 the following year. MinnARP reports that the winter schedule of the train has been set, and it is not to the state's liking. The state wanted it to run on its Friday "Ski Train" schedule for all six months of the winter season, but Amtrak restricted the evening departure schedule to Dec 16-Mar 30 only, and the rest of the Nov-April period will have the normal Friday departure schedule.....

★★★

WASHINGTON STATE FAIR gets a special stop at Puyallup for Amtrak trains during the period Sep 9—Sep 25. The three daily trains will all stop there, and a special fare for those traveling to the fair will be in effect.....

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC announced on Aug 24 that it had named Lon P. Marsh as superintendent of the road's Western Division, headquartered at Oakland CA. He succeeds Michael D. Ongerth, who was named general manager of Amtrak-transit systems on SP lines. Ongerth lives in Berkeley.....

FORMER AMTRAK PRESIDENT Paul Reistrup told the Ohio ARP at its recent 10th anniversary meeting that railroad management urged labor to agree to inflated rail passenger costs in negotiations in exchange for freight concessions, thus driving up the costs of passenger service. Many rail supporters had suspected that this happened, but Reistrup's talk tends to verify it.....

VANDALS PLACED TIES on teh track at Van Nest, milepost 13 in the NE Corridor on Aug 27, and the MERCHANTS LIMITED struck them (train 177) but did not derail. The debris wedged under engine 920, severely damaging the pilot. The train was delayed 74 minutes? engine 931 was eventually substituted.....

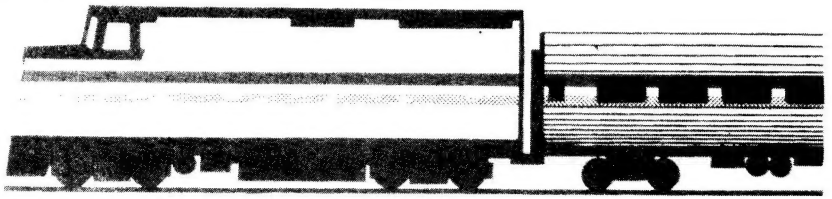
AUTO TRAIN SERVICE may gain Amtrak some income on the East Coast, but it also results in some lost sales around the system. This is because introduction of the service resulted in many more calls to Amtrak to inquire about, and much longer

conversation times required to explain the complicated provisions of the new service. For example, onAug 26 , 5867 calls to Amtrak were lost because of lines being tied up. That was a 581.4% increase in lost calls in comparison with the same date in 1982. That represented 7.4% of all calls offered on Aug 26; in 1982 only 1.3% were lost. Besides the length of calls, down time on the computer contributed to the poor performance of Amtrak's reservations offices that day.....

★★★

PHILADELPHIA AND PITTSBURGH would be connected by a high-speed rail passenger system if the Pennsylvania High Speed Rail Commission has its say. Executive Director Bob Casey told the group that "It can be done. The technology exists to build and operate such a system." He urged that a feasibility study be performed soon. A high speed system could be built along the existing rail corridor, Casey said. Construction of such a system would run an estimated $2 billion.....

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT may not be supporting trains with the enthusiasm it did under the Brown Administration, but it has produced a "California Intercity Rail Timetable", dated Jun 1-Oct 29. (One of the trains listed in it, the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, seems unlikely to survive to the Oct 29 date.) The folder, the most complete single listing of rail and connecting bus service in California, is available at Amtrak stations in the state. The illustration below is taken from the cover of the timetable.....



PORTLAND, OREGON'S GREYHOUND Bus depot will move to a location adjacent to the Amtrak station, since the County Board of Commissioners on Sep 8 voted by a narrow 3-2 margin to approve the transfer of a county-owned block for the purpose. City Tri-Met bus operators have also complained about traffic interference with Greyhound buses in their present location.....

CITY OF MONTEREY, California and the Monterey Peninsula Recreation Trail Joint Powers Agency are still battling over the fate of the SP line in the Monterey area. Monterey wants it for a transit line, while the JPA wants to remove it and create a recreational hiking and biking trail. At the end of August, Monterey made a move to buy the track from SP, after which the JPA went to court to try to block such a sale. The track has been removed from the branch line's terminus at Asilomar to the site of the former SP depot in Pacific Grove, now occupied by a mobile home court. The track is still in place between Lovers Point in Pacific Grove and Washington Street in Monterey by the former SP depot, which still stands.....

★★★

NORTHWEST AMTRAK BOOSTERS are not happy at the schedule manipulations on the PIONEER, now hooked into the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR system. The October schedule change calls for a 6:45am departure eastbound/southbound from Seattle —very early. Anything earlier than 8am effectively discontinues the train for about 75% of potential passengers, according to one suggestion received by RTN.....

BN RECENTLY REQUESTED permission from the FRA to remove signals on its Pasco-East Auburn ex-NP line via Stampede Pass in Washington State. Some observers say this is the first move to abandonment of the line over the Pass. BN this summer announced it wants to remove the ex-GN main line west of Newport WA.....

THREE EX-SP FERRYBOATS build 1927 are going in for a major rebuild this fall and winter to extend their lives another 20-25 years on Puget Sound—the "Illahee", "Quinalt" and "Nisqually".....

CONGRESSIONAL POLITICAL THREATS to Amtrak are cropping up with the Amtrak reauthorization bill now being worked on. The House Commerce Committee approved $730 million on Sep 14, but Florio has included langugage that would force Amtrak to discontinue any sunset commuter trains that project an avoidable loss per passenger mile of over 11 cents in FY 84. This is aimed at theHarrisburg trains, no. 600-602, 604 and 617, which Amtrak says would not meet the criterion. NARP said that at the least it would expect train 601 to be dropped under this provision. Pennsylvania rail supporters are being urged to write their Senators in support of these trains and opposition to the Florio plan. Another threat to Amtrak is Senator Armstrong of Colorado's plan to force Amtrak to become financially self-sufficient by FY 85, just two funding cycles from now. NARP is urging all rail supporters to write their Senators in opposition to the Armstrong provision, and in opposition to any amendment which alters Senator Packwood's handling of the Amtrak debt. NARP said it supports the bill the way it is.....

STATE OF NEW MEXICO would receive upto $75,000 under the Amtrak reauthorization bill as it is now written, to conduct a feasibility study of a high-speed rail line between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. The bill also requires Amtrak to continue rail service to St. Petersburg for two more years. In addition, it presents some new hurdles to American High Speed Rail.....

★★★

CITY OF DOWNINGTOWN, Pennsylvania will be added to the newly-extended PENNSYLVANIAN with the Oct 30 timetable change.....

THE CAPITOL LIMITED was ridden by NARP Director Anthony Perl on Labor Day westbound, and he spotted screen stars Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in the Vista-Dome car. They were returning from completion of an acting engagement.....

AMTRAK'S OKLAHOMA STUDY will be completed by the end of this year, the rail corporation projects.....

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD Centennial celebration was reported on in the New York Times of Aug 28.....

THE COAST STARLIGHT, train 11 of Aug 23, experienced a fire in the diaphragm between the third and fourth cars, nos. 31029 and 31040, caused by a careless smoker. The crew extinguished the fire with fire extinguishers, the conductor receiving burns on his hands in the process. There were no passenger injuries. The fire was spotted at 6:55am at an unreported location. Train was delayed 15 minutes.....

★★★

THE SANTA FE would consider buying Conrail, said Santa Fe Industries Chairman and CEO John J. Schmidt in a Wall Street Journal report of Sep 1. The article is an interesting personality study of Schmidt, who took over from John S. Reed about five months ago. Schmidt isn't as much of a railroad man as Reed, who kept a tight rein on the operations of the railway.....

BOSTON GLOBE COLUMNIST wrote on Aug 22 about "The slow train to NY." The train was the NEW ENGLAND METROLINER, which he took Boston-NY. His conclusion: "Amtrak to New York is delightful. The meals are good, the seats comfortable, the seacoast views terrific and the employees courteous; but the bottom line is time. Four plus hours just isn't good enough".....

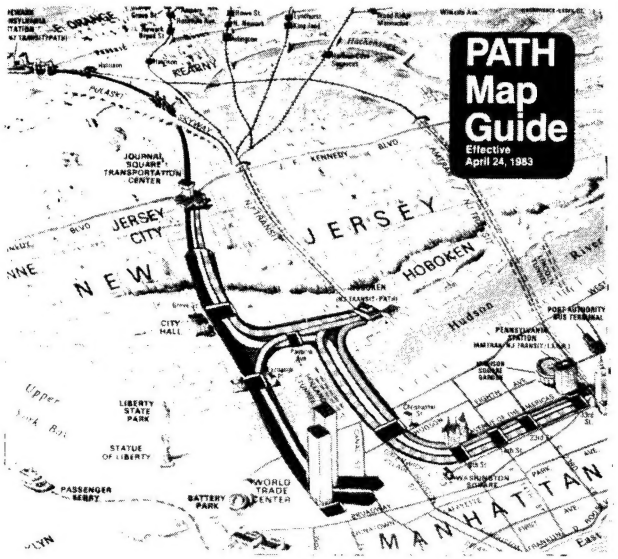
CITY OF LOS ANGELES has given up trying for an agreement with the owners of Union Station to use it as a transit center in exchange for private development of the land. The next step is to condemn the property so the city can take it over. A trial will commence on Oct 17.....

AMTRAK'S ANNUAL REPORT for 1982 is just out, and it certainly is a handsome publication. The front and back covers bear a color photo of a Superliner train in mountainous territory—probably the CZ in the Sierra.....

 News in this issue is updated thru Sep 17, 1983.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT (continued from page 6)

use of the service will not be restricted by priorities or conditions related to the purpose of the trip, and users will not be required to wait an unreasonable length of time for the service.



THE PATRAIN SERVICE in Pennsylvania's Mon Valley, serving Pittsburgh-KcKeesport-Versailles, is in trouble (this is a followup to our item in RTN 273). High fares coupled with the poor economy lead to a recent dropoff of ridership. The trains are said to be losing $2 million in FY 83, after a $1.1 million loss in FY 82. Rail supporters blame PAT Board member James Roddey for some of the problems, as he keeps insisting that the trains be cut (tho lately he has softened his rhetoric). The system finally got a fare reduction this summer, but scheduled advertising may have been too late in appearing to help much.

The Keystone Association of RR Passengers has offered suggestions for economizing: adjusting service times and frequencies, use of self-service fare collection devices, elimination of station crew positions and crew reductions on the train, and an investigation into the Chessie System's charging of operating rights costs. KARP Director Chuck Rompala says his organization feels the railroad is charging maximum price for minimal service.

PATH MAP ILLUSTRATION above shows the location of Journal Square Transportation Center , whose ceiling collapse was reported on in our last issue (page 5).

WHITHER BART EXTENSIONS? The BART Board of Directors dealt with the controversial question of where new system extensions should run, at their Sep 1 meeting. The resulting plan approved after much argument is probably meaningless, as the system does not have the funds for the construction, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission will have considerable input into the question besides. Four simultaneous extensions were approved: to West Pittsburg, to Warm Springs, to Castro Valley and Dublin, and to somewhere in San Francisco. The San Francisco location was not specified, but a line under Geary Street has been mentioned. The policy approved by the Board prohibits an extension down the San Francisco Peninsula until the aforementioned lines are built.

THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE has been grappling this month with the thorny question of setting up a Metro Rail District taxation plan to collect taxes from property owners near the planned Los Angeles Metro Rail system.

PENINSULA RAIL 2000 is the name of a new consumer group aimed at saving the San Francisco Peninsula commute line. The group announced last month a proposed program including electrification of the line and extension to downtown S.F.

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CARS & CONSISTS

***CANADIAN, VIA train 1, lv Calgary Aug 28: engines nos. unknown; cars 607 bag-dorm, coaches 110, 123, 3214 w. snack bar, Skyline dome 505, Dayniters 5710, 5731, coach cafe-lounge 3032, slprs "Allan Manor", "Dunsmuir Manor", "Terra Nova River", "Edwardsville", "Englee", "Erickson", diner 1367, slprs "Chateau Roberval", "Cornwall Manor", "Butler Manor", "Banff Park" dome-obs.**

***SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, train 15, Oakland Sep 5: engine 217 (on at Oakland); cars 1127, 2984 "Pine Cavern", 2941 "Pacific Waters", 28306, 21875, 21815, 21880.**

***PALMETTO, train 89, New York Aug 27: Advance section: engine 941 (AEM); cars 21037, 21149, 21238, 21852, 20031, 21118, 21175. (NY-Wash. only.) Regular section: engine 911 (AEM); cars 1264, 4648, 4717, 4644, 3125, 4643, 4008, 4000, 20011, 4645, 25070, 21865.**

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THE COST OF IDLE CAPACITY

(continued from page 10)

$16,874,000 in revenues, so according to Amtrak we can expect $1,687,400 in marginal food service revenue, and if Amtrak's food costs are as high as 40%, the marginal food service profits will add another $1 million to the bottom line.

Assume next that as little as 15% of the transportation profits were carefully invested in advertising four major Western routes during the off-peak months and that such a campaign, about $35,600 per route per month, could produce a 5% increase in ridership. This campaign then would gross $1,596,000 in marginal revenue, 950 riders per route per month at $70 each, virtually free of any other cost save reservations and ticketing (about $9 per passenger) and the advertising costs, for another $533,700 of pure marginal profit and $159,600 of marginal food service revenue.

These numbers are only rough approximations based on current actual average performances and the assumptions stated. Nevertheless, they are sufficiently accurate and conservatively stated to indicate that Amtrak's fixation on "corridor" markets and its chronic disdain for long-haul market opportunities, with its resulting strategic decisions regarding capital equipment deployment, are costing it millions of dollars annually in lost revenues and profits.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Oct 1: Hudson River in Autumn: NY-Albany/Rensselaer RT on ADIRONDACK with private car Lehigh Valley #353. Champagne brunch, cocktails, light supper aboard. $135. Limit 20. David L. Ross, 300 Winston Dr, Apt 2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010.

Oct 2: Mohawk Express, 1st Amtrak via 4 3/4-mile Hoosac Tunnel to Mechanicville NY. From Boston, Framingham, Worcester, Springfield. Fall foliage. $42, child $25 Mystic Valley Rwy Soc, PO Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126. 617-361-4445.

Oct 2: NY-Syracuse roundtrip private car LV 353 on MAPLE LEAF & Empire Serv train. "Morning restoratives", coffee & pastries, champagne brunch. $155. Limit 20 David L. Ross, 300 Winston Drive, Apt. 2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010. 886-1359.

Oct 7-9: Autumn in New England. Syracuse-Boston RT, private car LV 353, sumptuous meals aboard. Candlelit dinner, vintage wine. $240, hotel extra. Limit 20 guests. Lehigh Black Diamond Ltd, PO Box 353, Syracuse NY 13201. (315) 472-4293.

Oct 8-10: "Foliage International" special Atk train Boston-Worcester-Springfield-Montreal via White River Jct., RT. $199 double occ. Mystic Valley Rwy Society, Inc., PO Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126. 617-361-4445 24 hours.

Nov 13: Hoboken NJ-Susquehanna PA via old Erie RR main. First psgr train in over 20 yrs on this route. Lv Hoboken 8:15am, return 8:30pm. $44. Tri-State Railway Historical Society Inc., PO Box 2243, Clifton NJ 07015.

Nov 20: Railroad Extravaganza, Boy's & Girls' Club of Union NJ 10am-4pm. Over 100 tables of RR memorabilia. $2, child or senior $1. Rain or shine. 857-2987.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

AMTRAK - VIA RAIL CANADA - EURAIL PASS - OCEAN LINER CRUISES - RAIL TOURS - RAIL EXCURSIONS - CHARTER RAIL CARS. Arrangements by phone or appointment - use your credit card - Tickets mailed promptly. A fully appointed travel agency with masters of ship and rail travel. GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, 639 Market Street, San Francisco CA 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

LARGE RAILROAD CHRISTMAS CARDS from as low as $2.41 dozen, delivered. PREDDY'S CARDS, Box 572, Point Roberts WA 98281-0572. Free sample. Canadian $ at par.

GISELLE'S TRAVEL CORP at 1215 4th St. Sacramento CA 95814, Phone: (916) 446-1211 offers rail tickets on AMTRAK - VIA (CANADA) - EURAILPASS along with tours and accommodations in cities to which you are traveling. Let Giselle's help you take your next memorable rail trip.

WHAT IS the legal basis of the NARP board's refusal to publish an ANNUAL REPORT of receipts and expenditures and of major Association activities and goals??

Schedules, Trains, PTJ, RTN; P. Kremen, Box 252, Swan Lake NY 12783, 619-233-0469

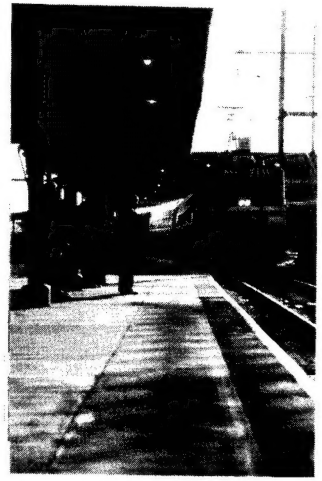
"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads cost just $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads are only $1.25 per square inch. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

JULY 1983 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE (DECREASE) OVER 1982

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	JUL 1983	PERCENT CHANGE
METROLINERS	74,634	(2.8)
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	466,988	(12.0)
NEW ENGLAND METROS	5,383	.0
NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	19,015	14.9
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	178,069	13.8
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	58,195	(6.4)
NEW YORK-HARRISBURG	20,413	(8.6)
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	822,697	(4.9)
SHORT DISTANCE		
NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS	71,655	6.7
CHICAGO-ST. LOUIS	26,285	1.1
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	14,323	8.5
CHICAGO-DETROIT-TOLEDO	37,744	7.7
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	12,744	4.4
CHICAGO-QUINCY	6,495	6.9
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	119,676	2.9
SEATTLE-PORTLAND	5,218	8.3
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	12,759	(26.7)
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	21,877	18.0
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	9,621	(2.0)
CHICAGO-PORT HURON-TORONTO	12,440	29.3
MINNEAPOLIS-DULUTH	11,850	(27.7)
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	15,020	(25.0)
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	5,982	6.5
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	12,358	9.0
PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH	7,780	(6.3)
PORTLAND-EUGENE		.0
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	9,087	7.2
MIAMI-TAMPA	4,754	.0
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	417,668	2.8
LONG DISTANCE		
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	13,399	(16.4)
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	74,899	5.4
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	31,597	10.8
CHICAGO-CIN-WAS-NEW YORK	10,805	2.1
CHICAGO-SEATTLE/PORTLAND	53,638	9.1
CHICAGO-OAKLAND	39,341	22.3
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	34,897	5.3
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	23,332	(1.7)
CHICAGO-TEXAS	14,338	21.0
LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS	11,309	5.3
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	57,866	8.5
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	43,554	13.2
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	10,084	8.2
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	21,368	(5.7)
SEATTLE-SALT LAKE CTY/CHICAGO	17,056	(2.5)
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	33,224	6.3
LOS ANGELES-OGDEN-CHICAGO	13,263	(5.0)
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	503,970	6.4
SPECIAL TRAINS	768	326.7
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,745,103	.0



Given here are the latest Amtrak patronage figures, for July. The June figures were published in RTN #273.

July ridership was up only an insignificant amount over July 1982--a total of 355 passengers, for an increase of .02% (Amtrak called it a zero change). Long distance and short distance trains had more riders, but the NE Corridor decrease of 4.9% pulled down the overall system statistics. Up markedly was the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR (22.3%) and the EAGLE (21%), and in short distance the INTERNATIONAL LTD (compared with a month before its extension to Toronto) and the SAN JOAQUINS.

You may now submit your ratings of trains ridden since April 23. Survey results will be published after Oct 30.

Rate The Trains

RTN is resuming its train rating surveys. You can submit your ratings now on regularly-scheduled North American passenger trains (not commuter) that you have personally ridden since April 23, 1983.

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate each train on each of the 11 categories (A-K) listed below: (A) Your overall impression of the train, taking everything into account; (B) Service from operating crew (conductor, etc.); (C) Dining or snack crew service; (D) Lounge crew service; (E) Food quality; (F) Car mechanical condition; (G) Car cleanliness and housekeeping; (H) Condition of track & roadbed; (I) Desirability of train's schedule; (J) Condition of stations: (K) Appropriateness of type of equipment used.

Use the 9-point rating scale below. Do not use previous rating forms, as we have changed some of the categories. Put ratings on separate sheet from other correspondence.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Extremely poor ▲ Average, acceptable ▲ Extremely good

RTN'S TRAIN RATING FORM

NAME & ADDRESS:

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Can we use your name? _____

TRAIN NAME & NUMBER	DATE RIDDEN	A Overall	B Operating Crew	C Dining Crew	D Lounge Crew	E Food Quality	F Car Condition (mechanical)	G Car Cleanliness	H Track Condition	I Scheduling	J Station Condition	K Type of Cars (appropriate?)	COMMENT SYMBOL*
													①
													②
													③
													④
													⑤
													⑥

*COMMENTS: To add comments, copy circled number on separate sheet, write train name after it, followed by your comments.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709